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Tensions mount on campus as go-links turn the spotlight on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

By ABIGAIL CHANG
Senior News Editor

A set of three go-links — the online shortcuts accessible to those on campus WiFi — drew attention this week after they were discovered by the Middlebury chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). The links — go/palestine, go/palestinian and go/sjp — brought users to an Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs webpage titled "Palestinian terror and incitement."

The entries in the go-link directory indicated that the shortcuts were created by Benjamin Lesch '24. Lesch later removed the go-links, according to an all-school email from the Community Bias Response Team (CBRT) on Wednesday. He did not respond to a request for comment.

The links were discovered soon after SJP shared their new informational website through a poster-based advertising campaign that featured the go-link go/apartheid. The link leads to the home page of the site, which reads "End Israeli Apartheid."

SJP said the purpose of the website is to educate students and spread awareness, and that the use of the word "apartheid" was deliberate. "The term has increasingly been used by progressive activists in the U.S., Palestine, as well as Israel itself," SJP leadership said.

Several go/apartheid posters across campus were also torn down, according to a post on SJP's Instagram page. The CBRT email also noted that a student associated with SJP has received multiple indirect threats that the Department of Public Safety is now investigating.

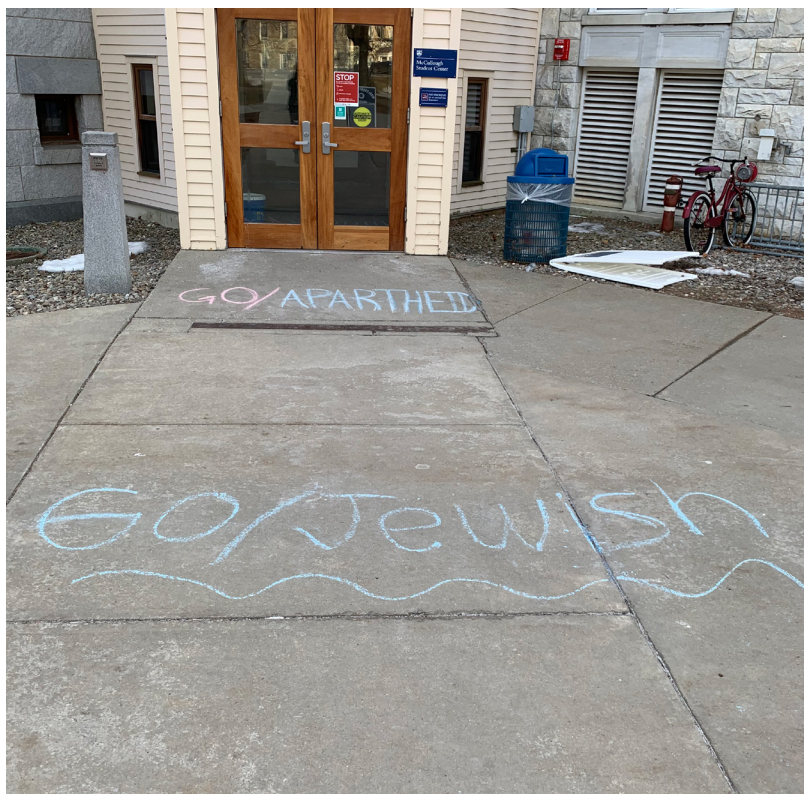
The club responded to the vandalization of their posters and the creation of the go-links in an email to The Campus.

"SJP disavows any and all violence. Not only is this a discriminatory act that delegitimizes our club as we responsibly engage in social justice work and educational initiatives, but it also blatantly condones anti-Arab racism," SJP leaders said.

Lesch has been placed on indefinite leave from the positions he held in Middlebury Consulting Group and on the Student Investment Committee, according to statements both groups gave to The Campus.

Laurie Essig, faculty adviser to SJP, said she asked Dean of Students Derek Doucet to address the creation of the go-links.

"I hope that some sort of restorative justice practices will be implemented so the student responsible can learn that disagreement does not mean we can harass and intimidate those with whom we disagree," Essig said. "I do believe the symbolic weight for Palestinian persons on campus of being called 'terrorist' is a lot to bear and, as a community, we must all condemn this sort of harassment."



HARRIET LEFAVOUR/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

RILEY BOARD/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The go/apartheid and go/jewish links have been chalked on sidewalks and walls across campus, including outside of McCullough (top) and BiHall (bottom).

Many students became aware of the go-links after SJP Co-President Kamli Faour posted a screenshot of a statement to SJP members on her Instagram story on Saturday.

"We do not take this discriminatory act lightly and are in communication with our club's advisor, Laurie Essig, the Students Activities Office, and several Deans," part of the statement read. "In the meantime, we would like to stress the importance of remaining peaceful and keeping SJP members, Palestinian, and other Arab students safe."

On Monday night, a new go-link was chalked on campus pathways — go/jewish. The link, described in the go-link directory as "a letter that reflects how many Jews currently feel on campus," was created by Eyal Yakoby '24.

In the letter, Yakoby described feeling saddened and unsafe due to the events of the previous week and said that other Jewish students on campus felt similarly. He wrote that the Middlebury SJP chapter has "frightened many Jewish students here on campus" and listed examples of SJP chapters at other institutions who had reportedly targeted Jewish students or individuals on those campuses.

Yakoby also cited a go-link created by Matt Martignoni '21.5, co-president of SJP. The link, go/antisemitism, previously sent users to a Google Doc about Zionism, but Martignoni said it was removed before Yakoby shared his letter.

"This link in itself is an act of anti-Semitism," Yakobi wrote. "Indeed, the Google Doc has no mention of actual anti-Semitism in it, rather it mocks that which has plagued the Jewish community for so long."

Martignoni said they created and used this go-link out of fear that it

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A match made in algorithm: 60% of students participate in 'Middlebury Marriage Pact'

By SOPHIA McDERMOTT-HUGHES
News Editor

Last night, 1,511 students opened their emails to find the name of their "optimal" match. They stared at their screens. They laughed, seeing their friends, or grimaced, recognizing an annoying classmate. They dismissed it or agonized over it, drafting and redrafting the same message over and over again. After all, how do you write an email introducing yourself to your future spouse?

The Marriage Pact launched at Middlebury seeking to find each student's most compatible partner on campus. Entries closed on Monday with nearly 60% of the student population responding, and participating students waited in eager anticipation until they received their matches yesterday.

THE PACT

The Marriage Pact — a project originally launched out of a Stanford economics class in 2017 — consists of an algorithm that uses participants' answers to a 50-question survey designed to find their optimal romantic — or platonic — match.

The Pact's mission is to find participants' most compatible long-term partner and marital "backup plan" in case they end up single later in life.

"Among all the people at a school like Middlebury what are the odds that the one person you happen to be friends with because you met them freshman year, or you happen to be in the same a cappella group is actually the best person [who you could make a marriage pact with]?" said Liam McGregor, one of the Marriage Pact creators. "But surely, there's someone at Middlebury who's probably good enough, right? They might not be your soulmate. But, out of all the people, that's probably someone who is good enough for you to marry."

Since its founding, nearly 96,000 people have participated in the pact, forming 43,582 matches and one confirmed marriage. This year, the Stanford team began working with students at 33 colleges to launch the Marriage Pact on their campus, according to Mei-Lan Steimle, Stanford '21, one of the Middlebury launch team project managers.

Kennedy Coleman '21, one of the two students at Middlebury who helped bring Marriage Pact to the college, said the ultimate goal of the Marriage Pact at Middlebury is to "bring the community together at a time when we have to be 'one Panther apart'"

"I'm just excited to be doing something collectively again," she said. "Having a big chunk of the campus be in on something just feels really good and needed right now."

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SARAH FAGAN

DESTRUCTION OF PROCTOR MILK MACHINE INJURES EMPLOYEE

The Department of Public Safety is investigating the incident but has no suspects yet

By HANNAH BENSEN
Editor at Large

When Krysta Rainey, a servery worker in Proctor Dining Hall, reported to work early Thursday morning, she noticed that the milk machine that normally sits in the corner of the hall was damaged. Upon inspection of the bags of milk inside the machine, one of the bags exploded, injuring Rainey's left shoulder.

According to Dan Detora, executive director of food service operations, the milk machine had a large dent on the front corner, the back panel had fallen off and the handles were damaged beyond use. Nothing else in the dining hall was damaged.

"My guess is that [the machine] was pushed off the counter," Detora said in an email to The Campus.

The damage to the machines is being investigated as an act of vandalism by Department of Public Safety (DPS) Investigator Lee Hodsden.

"I was upset and angry," Rainey said in an interview with The Campus about her injury that resulted from the incident. As of Monday afternoon, she said her injury, which she described as feeling like a pulled muscle, had improved but was still bothering her. She did not seek treatment for it.

The college rents the milk machines from Monument Farms and will ultimately have to pay for the damages, Detora said. It is not yet known how much it will cost to replace the machines.

"I just don't understand the reason for such behavior. [It] seems very disrespectful to our hard working staff," Detora said. "We hope that it is a one-time incident."

It is unclear how the person responsible for the vandalism entered Proctor Dining Hall, and it is not known for certain that a Middlebury student was responsible for the damage. According to Associate Director of Public Safety Keith Ellery, the exterior doors to Proctor lock at 8:30 p.m., meaning only authorized students and staff can enter the building. After 11 p.m., only authorized staff has access.

"There were no signs or indication of forced entry into Proctor," Ellery said in an email.

"An interior door was found unsecured and could have provided access to the area where the vandalism occurred. As part of nor-

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Language Schools bring eight programs back to Vermont after summer online

By KATIE FUTTERMAN
Contributing Writer

Eight Language Schools will return to in-person instruction in Vermont this summer while four will remain online, according to a Feb. 25 announcement from Dean of Language Schools Stephen Snyder.

The Abenaki, Arabic, French, German, Hebrew, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish schools will take place in person, following Covid-19 health protocols similar to Middlebury's guidelines for the fall and spring academic semesters. The Chinese, Italian, Japanese and Russian Language Schools will all take place virtually, and the School of Hebrew will also offer online options. All Language Schools were online in summer 2020.

In-person students will follow similar protocols as students arriving in the spring, including a pre-arrival quarantine, getting tested upon arrival and quarantining in their rooms until they receive negative test results. Courses will be online for the first week. All students will have single rooms, and the Language Schools will create socially distant co-curricular activities that will primarily take place outside. According to Snyder, some in-person schools will still have online components, but having several programs fully online will help keep campus less crowded.

Snyder worked with the directors of each school to make decisions about modality on a case-by-case basis, considering travel and safety on campus.

According to Cecilia Chang, the director of the Chinese School at Middlebury, finding enough faculty to keep class sizes small — to allow for proper social distancing — would have been challenging, as many potential faculty members were only available to

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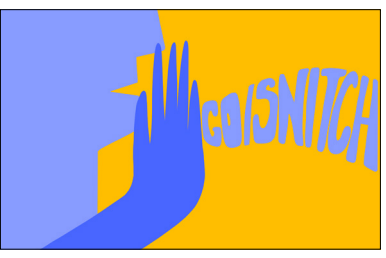
NEWS



The rise and fall of go/snitch
By RILEY BOARD

Free Snow Bowl passes bring long lines and new faces
By FLORENCE WU

LOCAL

Abenaki speaker series continues at CCV through the spring
By BECCA AMEN

Migrant Justice calls upon Hannaford to join Milk with Dignity program
By IDEAL DOWLING

Addison County shelters & homes adapt to challenges of Covid-19
By ANNA WOOD

ARTS & CULTURE

Direct Your Attention: Van Neistat pioneers the Industrial Essay Film
By OWEN MASON-HILL

WRMC Radio Roundup: Your mid-March mixtape
By THE WRMC EXEC BOARD

OPINION

Let's get used to twice a week testing
By EDITORIAL BOARD

'Solidarity is the political version of love'
By MATT MARTIGNONI

Why Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) worries me
By MAX SHULMAN-LITWIN

Jewish faculty support Students for Justice in Palestine
By LAURIE ESSIG

SPORTS

Erin Quinn '86 named Athletic Director of the Year
By JOSH ROSENSTEIN

Siefer's Scoop Episode 13: Hans Pessl '22.5, men's nordic
By BLAISE SIEFER

Jane Earley '23 tabbed USLM DIII Lacrosse Preseason Player of the Year
By NIAMH CARTY